

Athenian News:

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Dunton's Oracle.

From Tuesday August the 22th, to Saturday August the 26th, 1710.

The Red-Letter Saint: Or the Canonizing-Post.

Reader,

I Have certain Intelligence from Rome [July 12. 1710.] that the Pope appear'd lately in the Congregation appointed to examine the Allegations brought for Canonizing Pope Pius the Vth; and it being judg'd that there was sufficient Proofs of his Sanctity, he will be canoniz'd at Easter next, when I'm also inform'd, the Pope will perform the Ceremony of making Five other new Saints.

This Intelligence, as it first put into my Head to write the *Catholick and Amusing Posts*, so it also put me upon writing the following Essay, which I entitle, *The Red-Letter Saint: Or, the Canonizing Post*. Fortho' our British Almanacks present us with many Red-Letter Saints, yet the Manner and Reason of the Pope's Canonizing a Saint, is never (or rarely) discover'd; I shall therefore (to oblige my Athenian Readers) here publish *A Canonizing Post*.

The Canonizing of Saints is nothing else, but the publick Determination and Sentence of the Church, whereby some that are dead are judged to be Saints, and worthy of Honour and Worship; as to be prayed unto, Temples and Altars to be set up in their Names, Holy-days to be appointed for them, and their Relicks to be adored. And thus (say they) it is lawful, profitable, and expedient for the Church to Canonize Saints. This was the Pope's own Invention eight hundred Years after Christ, at the least; set abroad and continued in Policy, for the Confirmation of certain idolatrous Superstitions, which he labour'd thereby to advance, and now are made the seven Points wherein the Canoni-

zation consisteth, setting the new Saints in the Calendar with red Letters. Who gave the Pope that Priviledge to be infallible in that Judgment? For our Adversaries themselves acknowledge, they may be mistaken; how many Factions and Solicitations are used in the Court of Rome by Princes and States, that a Man of their Country or City be canonized. And at what vast Expences have they been to purchase it? The City of Barcelona, and the whole Country of Catalonia spent many thousand Pounds in the canonizing Raimond de Pennafort, a Dominican Friar. The Jesuits spent ten Millions for the Canonization of their two Twins, Ignatius Loyola, and Francis Xavier, whom they call the East-India Apostle. The Book of sacred Ceremonies doth acknowledge, that the Pope sometimes was constrained, in some Sort, to canonize a Man against his Opinion, and therefore made a Protestation. By that Protestation he thought to discharge his Conscience.

The Manner of Canonizing a Saint.

The Words whereby the Pope canonizeth a Saint are these: *In the Authority of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and in our own, we decree and define, that N. of good Memory, is a Saint, and must be put into the List of Saints, &c.* But before the Pronouncing of that Sentence, the Cause is pleaded in the Consistory, and an Advocate presents himself, who represents the Reasons why such a one ought to be sainted. The Apostles were not so sainted, nor their Disciples, nor those Fathers, who were called Saints, as Irenaeus, Cyprian, Basil, Hierome, Augustine, as a learned Divine noteth. It happens, saith he, to some poor Saints, for whom the Dignity of Saints is begged

begged in the Court of *Rome*, to be cast in their Suit, and they cannot be Saints in Heaven, because Men on Earth were not favourable to them. Sometimes the Degree of *Beati* is obtained for them, which is a middle Degree, and an Expectation of Saint-ship. By this Means Popes will give their Servants to be worshipped by the Nations of Christendom; which *new Saints* are far more honoured than the Patriarchs and Prophets: for in the Roman Church it fareth with Saints as with Clothes, the newest are the best, and most esteemed.

But whatever they pretend, the great Number of Saints canonized and commemorated among them, is neither a Sign of their good State and Condition of their Church; nor is there keeping so many Holy-days in Remembrance of them any Instance of true Devotion.

As for many of the Saints which they commemorate, we own as well as they, and can pretend as good a Right in them as they can, because we own, and will submit to whatever can be urged from them; such are the blessed Virgin, the Apostles and Evangelists; and after them also the Bishops, Martyrs and Confessors in the Primitive Church: But we confess that we have not the same Esteem of many whom they commemorate as Saints, and utterly disallow of their Canonizing or Saining of them: For many of them (I believe) never had any Being, but in the Fancy of these Saint-makers, who yet are commemorated, and prayed to as well as any others. Such are St. *Longinus*, under which Name they have made a Man of the Spear which pierced our Saviour's Blessed Body, St. *Almachius*, on Jan. 1. which only comes from the Corruption of *Almanack*; St. *Amphibalus*, who was only St. *Alban's* Cloak; St. *Ursula*, and her 11000 Virgins, of whom no Foot-steps can be found in true History. Many of them, I fear, it had been better that they had never been, as being notoriously vicious and scandalous in their Lives. And others, though more innocent, yet if we believe what is written in their Lives, were so prodigiously ridiculous, that a wise and religious Man would be ashamed of such Company. To hear Men in an Extasy of Devotion to talk Nonsense, or to preach to Birds and Beasts, to run naked, to wander voluntarily in Desarts, &c. is more likely with sober Men, to bring their Persons and Actions into Contempt and Scorn, than to affect them with any quick Sense of Religion; at best it will excite Men only to that extatical and enthusiastical Kind of Devoti-

on, which was in vogue among the Heathens, whose Priests were besides themselves, when they spake in the Name of their Gods; and their most celebrated Exercises of Religion were such Kind of irrational Actions; but there is nothing of this at all countenanced under Christianity: For the Gospel would make us wise as well as devout; and it is not required that we put off the Man, but the old Man and its Vices, when we become Christians.

And, tho' we are sensible of many among us, that have been very exemplary for Vertue and Piety, and have no reason to doubt of their Salvation; but have as full Assurance of it, at least, as they have of their Red-Letter Saints; yet we are very shy of canonizing or sainting them, because we know not Mens Hearts, nor dare we to presume to dispose so absolutely of Heaven as the Pope doth. We thank God for those that have lived and died well among us, and exhort our Friends to imitate all the Good which shewed it self in them; but we know not to what Purpose Canonization is. If it be only to recommend their Vertues to Example, the Canonization of them will signify no more than the bare History of their good Lives, faithfully recorded, would do; but if it be in Order to praying to them, we utterly condemn it. And it is too plain, that this is the End of their being canonized: For from that Time, solemn Prayer and Invocation is allowed and offered up to them. And this I believe hath been an Occasion of their falling from the Truth of Christian Doctrine as well as Practice: For they taking such a Man to be a Saint, think themselves obliged to follow and vindicate whatever he either did or said, as holy and true, not considering that the best of meer Men have been guilty of Mistakes and Imperfections; and then much more may we suspect the Judgment and Understanding, the Vertue and Piety of many of those that fill up the bigger Part of the *Romish* Calendar.

And for the same Reason, we think, there is not much Religion or Devotion expressed, in the keeping up the Memory of such Saints, by so many Holy-Days observed among them.

If they commend their Holy-Days for the Opportunities afforded in them of serving God in Publick, we have such Conveniencies in many Places every Day.

If they commend them as Days set apart to Rest and Idleness, we are not altogether of their Mind; for we think we have as many as our Poor can well spare; and are sure that they have more

more Holy-Days than their Poor can afford to observe: So that their Holy-Days are no Advantage to any; the Rich need them not, because if they have Abilities, they may be idle and luxurious every Day; but they are a great Evil and Burthen to the Poor, when they are forced to lose so many Days from their Work, by which they should maintain themselves and their Families: And tho' the Popes, by Reason of this Cry of the Poor, have been prevailed with to cut off many of those Days of Idleness, yet still in most Places; the Number of them is intollerable.

'Tis true, the Papists tell us, *That theirs is a Religion that only hath canonized her Professors for Saints after Death, and celebrateth their annual Memories, whereby their Names ever live in Honour, and all Posterity incited both to glorify God for his Graces bestowed on them, and also studiously to imitate their Virtues.*

To this I answer, 'tis true the Papists commend a Religion that *Canonizeth Saints*, but that maketh little for the Commendation of Popery, for it is not long since the *Canonizing of Saints* began; besides that, the Papists sometimes canonize Traytors and wicked Men for Saints, as *Becket* and *James Clement*, and some *English Rebels*, as *Coleman*, *Pickering*, *Whitebread*, *Green*, *Bury* and *Hill* (the Murtherers of *Sir Edmund Bury Godfrey*) and gave idolatrous Worship to these Saints. As for us, we keep the Memories of the Apostles, and reverently esteem holy Men departed, altho' not canonized by the Pope; but dare not pray to them as the Papists do, who believe the Saints departed hear their Prayers.

No marvel therefore if after this, our Christian Peripateticks, the Divines of *Culleyn*, have made *Aristotle* a Saint, as they did, if we believe *Cornelius Agrippa*, and perhaps prayed to him as devoutly as others prayed for him. *They count him among the Gods*, saith *Agrippa* in his 45 Chapter, tho' *Agrippa* himself be of a contrary Opinion; for he saith, *Aristotle killed himself, being made a Sacrifice worthy of the Devils.*

And from *St. Omer's* I have this Intelligence, *Feb. 3. New-Style.* This Day we celebrate the Festival of *Saint COLEMAN*; those that would read his Life and Wonders, let them peruse *Colganus*, a notable Retailer of Saints Lives, p. 246, and 247. where you may find how his Day came to be observ'd in our Catholick Church, and its Vigil kept with solemn Fasting; because once upon a Time, *Certain Thrashers*, not content with *Lenten-fare*, having a Mind on that

Day to a *WHITE-POT*, the same, when the, went to eat it, was turn'd into Blood.

But of his Miracles, I shall only divert you with one, which concerns a Tree, that by virtue of being planted by him, contracted such a wonderful Quality, that the least bit of it carry'd about a Person that had Confidence in the Saint, is a certain Security against the most eminent Dangers of Death; insomuch that the said Author affirms, *That a certain Malefactor being adjudged to die, having got a Piece of that Wood in his Mouth before he was truss'd up, was found alive after he had hang'd the usual Time; and so was a second and third Time hanged up, yet could not be strangled, till the Officers examining, found, and took out the Lignum Vitæ from his Chaps, and then he was presently as dead as an Herring.* We thought to have sent over a Parcel of this rare Timber to such Relations to the Saint, or intimate Friends of ours in *England*, as had, or may have need of it; but then we wisely consider'd, that though it were an Antidote against the *Haliter*, 'tis none against the *Cleaver*, and so forbore the Complement. But if any new Profelyte in Danger only of simple Hanging, will try the Experiment, let him speak to our Factors in *England*, and by the first Return, and Pence deposited, he shall be furnish'd so effectually as he may defy *Squire Ketch* and all his Works.

Thus far this zealous Catholick, and I believe there is no *Roman Catholick* now living in *England* or *Ireland*, but will freely own that the Papists maintain the Doctrine of Angel-worship, of Invocation of Saints, and of the Virgin *Mary*, and canonized Saints; calling especially upon the Virgin *Mary*. They usually carve, pourtray, paint the Statue of the Virgin, and represent her by them to the Eyes and Thoughts, when they pray unto her in all their Offices, Primmers, Psalters, Rosaries, Missals, Breviaries, Books of Devotion, Churches, Chappels, Monasteries, Altars of our Lady; especially on all their publick Festivals dedicated to her Honour, in greatest State, crowned with a Crown of Glory, as the Empress, Queen, Lady of Heaven, Earth, and all Creatures in them. In their publick Liturgy they have a Litany, whereby they pray,

1. To her.
2. To the Arch-Angels and Angels.
3. To Patriarchs and Prophets.
4. To the Apostles and Evangelists.
5. To the Martyrs.
6. To Fathers and Doctors.
7. To Popes and Confessors.
8. To Monks and Eremites.
9. To all the Saints, Virgins and Widows, that they would joyn together to make Intercession

for

for them. And to these Saints they have their set Holy-Days; to them they burn Tapers, perform Masses and Trentals: each have their sundry Collects, Hymns, Prayers and Oblations; each have their sundry Offices designed them. Some are over particular Towns and Cities; some over Trades and particular Professions; some are over Diseases; some have the special Gift of bestowing Arts and Sciences.

Now what is this but to forsake the Fountain of living Waters, and to hew out broken Cisterns that can hold no Water, as the Lord complaineth in a like Case? The rise of all this was from a preposterous Admiration of Saints departed, or (I may say of some of them, they were rather Devils incarnate:) and from the perverse Opinion of those who make no Difference between civil Prayer to Men living, and religious Prayer to Saints departed; which Error hath been maintained and heightened by the great Ambition, and Avarice of the Popish Clergy: so that now the *French Proverb* is not without Ground. *God cannot be known among so many Saints.*

The Rhiming-Post continued: Or, more Poems on Subjects desired.

The He-Platonick, address'd to Orinda—

A Flame as sacred as the Vows of those,
Who to Devotion do their Lives dispose.
My Love has nourish'd and to you,
It is an Off'ring due.

And with you let it burn,
Though I may hope but small Return;
Yet may my doubtful Thoughts have rest,
To know 'tis harbour'd in your Breast.
Where if but kindly cherish'd I'll not fear,
But it may kindle the like Passion there.

A Flame it is as chaste as your own Thought,
Free from the Vices Nature would have taught;
Refin'd by Virtues that attend,
A Lover and a Friend.

With Freedom then you may receive,
What with such Innocence I give;
And if some Heat from you't procures,
There's still no Fear of hurting yours.
For in that Love no Poison is convey'd,
Where Friendship is the chief Ingredient made.

My Love thus lodg'd, I could contented live;
But when I think how true how much I give;
Your gen'rous Mind bids me expect,
From you the like Effect.

Then fear not boldly to bestow,
Your Love where you in Reason owe.
For that and Justice too will say,
It is a Debt you ought to pay;
But if your Inclination disapprove,
My Resolution shall be still to love.

The Looking-Glass.

I.

O H happy Thing! What would I give to be
My Mistress's Glass, instead of thee?
Thou see'st the Glorious Image ev'ry Day,
For which I hourly pine away.

II.

(view;
By thine own Light thou scarce her Form canst
Thy very Light and Essence too
Proceeds from her, as *Phabus's* borrow'd Ray,
Reflects the Image of the Day.

III.

Would she but cast such quick'ning Beams on me,
I should her living Image be;
Look when she pleas'd, her Picture she would find
Deeply imprinted in my Mind.

IV.

The Faithless Glass ten thousand Forms does bear,
When she alone should revel there,
And, Courtier-like, to ev'ry one can say,
Thou art the Beautiful and Gay.

V.

Be false to all the rest, be only true
To her, and this I'd have thee do,
Preserve th' *Idea* of my Saint in Store,
'Till I shall see thy Face once more.

VI.

Then to thy Shrine a Reverence I'll pay,
Like zealous *Romans* ev'ry Day;
I'll hug the Relick with a pious Fear,
Because I know the Goddess's there.

VII.

But if she's charged thee, thou shouldst not trace
The least Discovery of her Face,
The strict Injunction ne'er shall trouble me,
Seeing ye're both Hypocrisy.